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NSC BRIEFING

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23 February 1955

SOVIET STATEMENT ON ATOMIC WEAPONS BAN AND ARMAMENTS LIMITATIONS

- I. The Soviet statement of 18 February on the forthcoming London meeting of the UN Disarmament Subcommittee serves a triple purpose of influencing Bundestag debate on Paris Agreement (opening 24 February,) and the formation of new French government, and of establishing propaganda position for the London meeting.
  - A. Timing and content of statement suggest it is another attempt to inject new and unsettling factor into crucial decisions on German rearmament. Moscow has used this device on two such occasions within the last six months:
    1. On 26 August, four days before French National Assembly rejected EDC, the Soviet ambassador in Paris informed Mendes-France that there was a large measure of agreement between the Soviet and French positions on disarmament.

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2. On 29 September, the day after London Conference opened,

Molotov gave French ambassador an advance copy of the disarmament plan which Vyshinsky submitted to the UN on the following day and indicated that this plan should be considered an alternative to German remilitarization.

B. Present statement follows usual pattern of seeking to connect problems of general reduction and control of armaments with German rearmament.

1. It reiterates argument that German remilitarization and NATO Council decisions on use of atomic weapons are inconsistent with disarmament.

II. The only new element in 18 February statement is proposal to place a ceiling on armed forces and military budgets at the levels of 1 January 1955.

A. The previous Soviet proposals, introduced by Vyshinsky at the UN on 30 September, stressed a reduction by "agreed norms" in conventional armaments and military expenditures

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and accepted the French-British date of 31 December 1953  
as the base level from which to measure the reduction in  
armaments and expenditures.

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